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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT JOINS FAA AND AIRLINE PARTNERS TO BREAK GROUND ON
FINAL PIECE OF O'HARE RUNWAY RECONFIGURATION**

*Project marks major milestone in O'Hare Modernization Program with more improvements to
come from O'Hare 21*

CHICAGO - Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, representatives from United and American Airlines, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today broke ground on the Runway 9R/27L extension. This is the final component of the O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP), a project that has reconfigured and balanced O'Hare's airfield, increasing capacity, improving efficiency, and dramatically reducing system impact delays.

"We are very excited to begin the final phase of the O'Hare Modernization Project as we move forward with our full vision for O'Hare airport with the \$8.5 billion O'Hare 21 program," said Mayor Lori Lightfoot. "Chicago's status as a global city rests on O'Hare's ability to handle the ever increasing demand capacity, and today's groundbreaking stands as a major milestone in ensuring a seamless experience for everyone passing through our city for years to come."

The extension of Runway 9R/27L and the additional ongoing airfield projects will continue to have a major economic impact on Chicago for years to come and will ensure significant local workforce participation remains a top priority. Over the next two years, this project will create an additional 1,600 construction and professional services jobs – adding to the tens of thousands of jobs created over the life of the OMP project.

"O'Hare will now have a 21st century airfield – one that is ever safer and more efficient while providing air traffic control the most flexibility for routing aircraft," said CDA Commissioner Jamie L. Rhee. "I want to thank the FAA and our airline partners for making this project of national significance a reality, and I would be remiss not to acknowledge the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission and Suburban O'Hare Commission for their hard work and effective advocacy over the years."

The O'Hare Modernization Program was first approved by the FAA in 2005, setting into motion the reconfiguration of the entire O'Hare airfield and leading to increased capacity and greater efficiency. What had been a network of intersecting, diagonal runways has been largely replaced by a series of six east/west parallel runways. System impact delays are



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down 63% since the project began, and airfield operations are now more predictable and better able to handle weather and atmospheric conditions.

“Keeping O’Hare International Airport as an engine for our local and national economy is critical,” said U.S. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi. “Extending the length of runway 9R-27L broadens O’Hare’s international reach and capacity, along with positioning the greater Chicago area to be key players in the global economy.”

Progress made on the OMP runway reconfiguration has paved the way for the next phase of O’Hare modernization: an \$8.5 billion O’Hare 21 Terminal Area Plan, which will dramatically improve first impressions and curb-to-gate travel experience for millions of travelers arriving at O’Hare each year. The plan includes a complete transformation of Terminal 2 and integration of both domestic and international terminal operations into a single Global Terminal (OGT) and Global Concourse (OGT). Earlier this year, Studio ORD, a joint venture led by renowned Chicago architect Jeanne Gang, was selected to design the OGT.

“Today’s project, along with the rest of the O’Hare Modernization Program, will lead to a more efficient experience for passengers and airport operations while creating jobs and increased economic opportunities for the region,” said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. “I was proud to help secure federal funding for this runway expansion and stand ready to work to ensure this airport continues to grow in the years to come.”

OMP has been funded through a combination of federal and airline funds – with the \$334 million 9R extension project being approved as part of the 2018 Airline Use and Lease Agreement (AULA), the primary funding mechanism for the O’Hare 21 project.

“As Chicago’s Airline of Choice, we are proud to join our partners at the City of Chicago in celebrating yet another milestone in O’Hare’s transformation,” said Michael Minerva, American Airlines Vice President of Government and Airport Affairs. “Today, we are one step closer to attaining a world-class airport for our global airline, and thanks to our strong partnership with the city, we will continue to strengthen our network in Chicago and reaffirm O’Hare’s designation as a leading global hub.”

The extension will add 3,000 feet of length to one of O’Hare’s most heavily used runways, enabling it to handle increased operations from larger aircraft, including more long-haul departures. It will also help increase departure capacity and continue to balance the airfield between the north and south. It is scheduled to be completed in late 2021.

“We are proud to be Chicago’s hometown airline, and support the efforts to modernize O’Hare International Airport which will bring this vital part of our city into the 21st century while improving the experience for our customers. Today’s groundbreaking of the runway 9R extension is a major step forward in that effort, and is the last piece of the puzzle to modernize the runways - and we look forward to it furthering the reduction of delays and improving our operation,” said Gavin Molloy, United’s Vice President of corporate and environmental affairs.



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“The modernization of O’Hare Airport has been an investment by the FAA that has benefited the entire National Airspace System – allowing for more efficient and, more significantly, safer operations,” added FAA Great Lakes Regional Administrator Rebecca MacPherson.

Last year, O’Hare’s on-time performance was recognized in Official Airport Guide’s Punctuality League Report in the top ten mega airports, placing above SFO, JFK, London Heathrow and Hong Kong, for on-time departures. In years past, it was not uncommon to find O’Hare at the very bottom of such lists.

“Projects like these provide more than a paycheck, they provide dignity and opportunity for working men and women across Chicagoland,” said Ralph Affrunti, President of the Chicago & Cook County Building and Construction Trades Council. “Over the life of a project like this – and the O’Hare 21 projects ahead – someone can grow and develop from an entry-level job all the way up and provide for themselves and their families a living wage, healthcare, and pension benefits.”

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